

Stephen Hoffman

# 3160

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IRRC

**From:** drevets1085@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Friday, December 09, 2016 1:42 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** proposed transition plan for pre-vocational day programs for Developmentally Disabled by the DHS and ODP negative impact

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Dear IRRC,

We are writing to express our serious concern regarding the Pennsylvania Statewide Transition plan proposed by The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) of The State Department of Human Services, to require that all programs for developmentally disabled adults must adopt a community based, integrated model, and can no longer follow a segregated work setting model (i.e., sheltered workshop). **While the ODP plan may work for some developmentally disabled adults, it will fail for many others.** A tragic consequence of the ODP plan is that it will lead to the closure of productive, pre-vocational training facilities for developmentally disabled adults, such as the one in which our son now works.

Our son, Marcus, has suffered from a life-long, severe cognitive disability, and has been unable to work in a variety of community settings. More recently, however, Marcus has been working in a vocational workplace in Bucks County, PA called Associated Production Services, Inc. (APS). This has been a wonderful program for our son as well as the other individuals who participate in this program. We feel that due to the severity of our son's disability, without this opportunity, he would not have a chance to work. In contrast, Marcus has thrived in the APS program, where he has been able to consistently participate in daily, constructive, work in a supportive and protected environment that we have not found anywhere else in the local community. His workplace provides the supervision and safety that our son needs as well as providing a job that he is capable of doing. It provides a place to socialize and make friends. He loves going to work every day and is proud of his paycheck. Although, it may not be a fully integrated work place, APS provides daily opportunities for Marcus to interact with non-disabled workers and supervisors. The regular work at APS has given our son a sense of purpose for each day, and has helped him build self-esteem and self-discipline. He has shown continued growth and maturation at APS. Unfortunately, APS has notified that they will need to close should the ODP proceed with their highly restrictive plan.

The ODP states that their plan is aimed at promoting safety, self-confidence, quality of life, friends and choice. All of these goals are being met already for our son and his disabled colleagues at APS. If this transition plan is not changed to allow pre-vocational training centers such as APS to continue their valuable role, the ODP essentially will be taking away from these disabled adults the ability to achieve the very goals they claim to be promoting.

The Supreme Court commented that the Americans with Disabilities Act **does not** condone termination of alternative settings for people unable to handle or benefit from community settings. In other words, the act allows for the continued operation of pre-vocational training centers when community placement is not appropriate and is not opposed by the affected individual. There are also provisions in the Workers Innovation & Opportunity Act for segregated work setting models (i.e., sheltered workshop) to continue as an option for individuals who are unable to work in a community setting.

As our son's advocate, we ask that you ensure that the Department of Human Services transition plan provides for the continued operation and availability of pre-vocational workplaces. We ask that you contact the ODP promptly to convey our request since we have been given less than 45 days to express our concerns about the transition plan.

In summary, the community inclusion model being initiated by the ODP aims to exclude segregated work settings. The transition plan proposed by the ODP thus will not allow the facility in which our son currently works to remain open. As parents of an intellectually disabled adult son who has consistently been unable to maintain work in community settings, we strongly disagree with the transition plan's requirement that individuals currently working in pre-vocational training facilities will no longer be allowed to do so, despite the absence of viable alternatives in the community. The current ODP plan removes the choice of a pre-vocational training facility to intellectually disabled adults who are unable to work in a community setting.

We would be pleased to meet with you in person or to discuss by telephone the importance of APS and the segregated work setting model to both our local community and to the developmentally disabled community.

Sincerely,

Wayne & Michele Drevets

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